

A New Species of *Primovula* from the Western Solomon Sea

(Gastropoda : Ovulidae)

BY

EDWARD J. PETUCH

Department of Zoology, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee; Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

(1 Plate)

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR SURVEYED the reef mollusks of the Louisiade Archipelago in the Solomon Sea east of New Guinea, from November, 1969 to January, 1970. While I was on Nimoa Island, in the Calvados Chain, a violent cyclone struck which lasted for 4 days. By the end of that time, the beaches were heaped with organisms brought up from deep waters surrounding the fringing reef complex of the island. Many rare and unusual gastropods were found, including a remarkable ovulid. Further research proved it to be new to science and it is herein described.

MESOGASTROPODA

CYPRAEACEA

OVULIDAE FLEMING, 1828

Primovula THIELE, 1925

Primovula piriei Petuch, spec. nov.

Description: Shell cylindrically-fusiform, elongate, with crenulated and flaring terminals. Dorsum with numerous incised traverse striae and 12 spiral rows of evenly-spaced pittings which give the surface a slightly knobby appearance. The shoulder exhibits 6 prominent keel-like knobs. Base of shell flattened with a large, heavily-striated columellar area and a prominent toothed columellar lip. Labial lip flattened, with 56 denticles which become larger and more prominent towards the posterior end and extend over the shell margin. Columellar lip with 53 large uniform denticles. Shell light-weight and glossy, bright lavender pink in color with small brown fleckings. Aperture flaring at anterior end, but narrowing posteriorly.

Holotype: National Science Museum, Tokyo, Japan; NS MT-Mo 42254

Type Locality: Nimoa Island, Calvados Chain, Louisiade Archipelago, Solomon Sea; 11° 16' S; 153° 15' E.

Dimensions of Holotype: length 17.6mm; width 6.2mm

Distribution: This species appears to be endemic to the Louisiade Archipelago, but probably is found in other areas of the Solomon Sea, such as the Trobriand Islands. Another specimen was reportedly dredged from deep water off the Engineer Group, and is now in the collection of a person on Samurai Island, Eastern Papua, New Guinea.

Discussion: Although the shell was collected in very fresh condition on the beach, nothing remained of the animal for dissection. The author tentatively places this species in the genus *Primovula*, though there is a possibility of its belonging to the genus *Prosimnia* Schilder, 1927. This can only be cleared up by future collecting and dissection of this species. *Primovula piriei* bears some resemblance to *Prosimnia coarctata* (Adams & Reeve, 1848), but can easily be separated from that species by its larger size, more inflated aperture and shoulder knobs. It could also be confused with *Primovula striatula* (Sowerby^{1st}, 1828) but differs in aperture shape, by having the knobs and heavily denticulated columellar lip. It is a very unusual species and cannot be readily confused with any other form in the Ovulidae.

On the beach where *Primovula piriei* was collected, there had washed up large piles of gorgonians and other alcyonarians. It is possible that the species is associated with them, as is *Prosimnia* (CERNOHORSKY, 1968), and clung to them while they were torn from their holdfasts in deep water by the storm surf.

The species is named in honor of Dr. R. Gordon Pirie, Professor of Oceanography, Geology Department of the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Mr. Henri Quin of Fairlight, New South Wales, Australia, for helping in the collection of specimens on Nimoa.

Literature Cited

CERNOHORSKY, WALTER OLIVER
1968. The Ovulidae, Pediculariidae and Triviidae of Fiji. *The Veliger* 10 (4): 353 - 374; pls. 50 - 52; 5 text figs.; 1 map (1 April)

